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Miscellaneous Pamphlets

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CASE OF THE REV. ALBERT BARNES

FAIRLY STATED.

ADDRESSED TO THE

MINISTERS, ELDERS, AND PEOPLE AT LARGE

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONS

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERY AND SYNOD OF PHILADELPHIA.

PHILADELPHIA:

1836.

THE

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OF THE REV. JOHN BAYNE

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CASE OF THE REV. ALBERT BARNES.

Fathers, Brethren, and fellow Christians—

Nothing can be more evident, than that Mr. Barnes and his coadjutors are using every effort and all their influence, to prepossess the public mind in his favour, and to prejudice it against the Synod of Philadelphia, in the matter of his suspension; and this with a view to insure his acquittal, and the condemnation of the Synod, at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, in May next. To this method of procedure they are encouraged, by the remembrance of the success which attended a similar course, when Mr. Barnes was brought before the General Assembly in 1831. Their system of action then, was, in substance, the very same which they are now pursuing. The explanations which Mr. Barnes gave of the sermon which was the cause of his prosecution at that time, were published, and sent throughout the length and breadth of the church. The sermon was also republished, and copies of it were distributed largely in the western part of our church; and the editor of the *Philadelphian* issued a large number of extra copies of that paper, containing the defence of Mr. Barnes, and a crimination of his accusers, and sent them, far and near, to ministers and elders, and other influential individuals, in various parts of our land. Nor was the enlisting of influence in the favour of Mr. Barnes confined to the Presbyterian church. The editors of the *Christian Spectator*, a monthly periodical published in New Haven, embarked in his cause with great zeal. Of this periodical Mr. Barnes has long been known as a correspondent, and on the occasion alluded to, the editors wrote in favour of their friend and coadjutor, lauding him in the most extravagant terms, and severely censuring the Presbytery that had commenced a prosecution against him; and they issued the number of the *Spectator*, that contained these eulogies on one hand, and censures on the other, a whole month before the usual time of its publication, and sent forward copies of their pamphlet, in time to be distributed among the members of the Assembly, before the trial of Mr. Barnes should

take place. Success attended these extraordinary efforts. For the first time, the New School party had a majority in the Assembly; a majority of nine, as appeared on the vote for a Moderator. The sequel will be noticed in another part of this address. We only add here, that the majority obtained by the New School party in 1831, they were afterwards able to maintain, so far, at least, as to influence that judicatory to discourage discipline, for four years in succession. They confidently calculated on retaining their ascendancy at the last Assembly, and began to take measures accordingly; but were grievously disappointed, when it appeared by the vote for a Moderator, that the orthodox members present formed an overwhelming majority.

It is certainly very natural, when a party have lost a majority, to resort to the same measures by which they have gained it, on a former occasion. This the New School party are at present attempting, and are doing it with a zeal even beyond what they have heretofore manifested. Their confidence of success is also great. Ever since the rising of the last Assembly, they have often and openly boasted, that the Assembly of the present year (1836) will reverse all the most important doings of the last. To produce this result, they avail themselves, as they did before, of the cry of PERSECUTION against Mr. Barnes, extol his talents and his piety, publish, and distribute in every part of the church, his defence and his explanations; and bitterly vituperate both individuals and judicatories, who have felt it to be a sacred duty to oppose his errors. The *Philadelphian* now, as heretofore, is the chosen vehicle, for sending abroad their commendations, and their accusations and reproaches. Some articles, indeed, have appeared in that paper, since the suspension of Mr. Barnes, which have so outraged all Christian principle, and all sense of decorum, that some of its former patrons have abandoned it in disgust; and thus, by overshooting their mark, the editor and his correspondents have rather in-

jured, than aided the cause, which they seek to sustain.

In civil courts, it is considered as highly censurable, and indeed as a punishable offence, to endeavour to prejudice the public mind, against or in favour of a party, on any important trial, while it is still pending. It were well, in our judgment, if this were the case in ecclesiastical, as well as in civil courts. But every restraint of this kind has, from the very first, and invariably since, been utterly disregarded, in the case of Mr. Barnes. For three months in succession, after he was put under discipline by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1830, that judicatory was publicly and vehemently criminated in The Philadelphian, before any member of the Presbytery appeared publicly in its defence; and when the defence did appear, it was in a pamphlet form, which had a very limited circulation, and therefore could have but little influence, in counteracting the party statements in his favour, which the flying sheets of the Philadelphian carried into every part of the country. Hence the distant Presbyteries were left to elect their members, under all the prejudice which they had imbibed from a one-sided view of the whole subject; and they sent members to the Assembly pledged, in many instances, to vote for the acquittal of Mr. Barnes.

It is clear that when one party, in an important ecclesiastical trial not yet terminated, resort to publications calculated to influence the popular mind in their favour, they reduce their opponents to the alternative of either doing the same, or by refusing to do it, hazarding the loss of their cause in the courts of the church. Here, brethren, is the reason and the sole reason, that has given rise to the present address, and to the determination to send it abroad, as widely as may be found practicable. Those concerned in this measure would gladly have remained silent, and suffered the appeal of Mr. Barnes to go up to the Assembly, without publishing a word in behalf of the Synod that suspended him, if he and his friends had adopted a similar course. But since we are constrained to come before our fellow Christians and fellow citizens, we shall embrace the opportunity it affords to disabuse the public mind, in regard to the whole case of Mr. Barnes; for notwithstanding all the noise it has made in our church, and in our whole country, for five years past, we are persuaded it is not correctly understood, by a large part of the community. Articles in the public papers show, that it has been regarded in some places, particularly in those at a distance from Philadelphia, as entirely a local affair, and a mere dispute about words; a petty quarrel among clergymen in and about this city, which they ought for their own credit's sake to hush up, and no longer trouble the church and the country with their unbecoming brawls and bickerings; especially that they should not continue unrelentingly to persecute, and interrupt the useful-

ness, of an able, pious and devoted minister of the gospel. Now, to the whole of this, we plead not guilty; and we think we can show, to the satisfaction of all who will give us an attentive and candid hearing, that the case of Mr. Barnes is one in which the whole Presbyterian church is deeply concerned; one that does vitally affect the whole doctrinal system of this church; and that the belief that it has been unnecessarily and wrongfully brought forward and continued before the public, is a belief founded, altogether in error—in error arising from the want of information in many, from indifference to the entire subject in a number, and from prejudice created by misrepresentation, in not a few—to say nothing of a large number, who have deeply sympathised with Mr. Barnes, because his errors are their own.* We purpose, therefore, to give a succinct narrative of the whole case of Mr. Barnes, from the time of his being called to settle in Philadelphia; and particularly of what took place in relation to him at the Synod, in which he was suspended from the gospel ministry—We shall make a few remarks as we proceed, and add a number at the close of our statement. And we do earnestly entreat our readers to give us an attentive, impartial, and patient hearing. We are going to speak of what we are intimately acquainted with; of things of which we have a personal knowledge; and we shall speak under an impressive sense of the account we are shortly to render to the all seeing and heart searching God, for not stating a single thing, contrary to our conviction of its truth. We make no pretensions to infallibility of judgment or opinion, but for the simple verity of what we state as matter of fact, we do feel a deep and solemn responsibility.

Mr. Barnes was an ordained and settled minister at Morristown, in New Jersey, at the time he received a call, in the Spring of 1830, from the 1st Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. When, in accordance with the constitutional order of the Presbyterian church, leave was asked to prose-

*We are aware that beside all these classes, there has been a large one, composed of what have been called *moderates*, or *peace men*—men in the main truly orthodox, who nevertheless have thought that the errors of Mr. Barnes, and of those whose doctrinal creed was similar to his, would best be corrected by argumentative writing and oral discourse, and that farther than this, it would be the wiser course to let them alone, and not disturb the peace of the church, by attempting to subject them to discipline—in time, it was thought, they would probably correct themselves. This class, we are ready to believe, by what appeared in the last General Assembly, has been much diminished, within the last two or three years. The good men who composed it, found, as we think, that the errors which they had judged could be reasoned down, or would die away of themselves, were rapidly increasing, both in number and in boldness, and really threatened to overwhelm the whole church.

cute this call, the granting of the request was opposed by some members of the Presbytery; but after an ardent and protracted discussion, they were found to be in a minority (the vote being for granting leave 21, and against it 12) and the call was accordingly prosecuted. Here was the origin of the whole controversy in regard to Mr. Barnes, which has since ensued—a controversy of which the detail of only that part of it that took place in the Presbytery and Synod of Philadelphia, before it went up to the General Assembly, would far exceed the limits of this address—only the principal facts of the case, therefore, can be stated, and this as summarily as a fair exhibition of the truth will permit.

But before we proceed to this, we beg a particular attention to a few remarks on the loud cry that has been raised—proclaiming that this whole affair had its origin in a spirit of persecution and bigotry. We ask, is there any evidence of this? Has any colourable proof of it, been ever fairly submitted to the public? We think an affirmative answer to these questions will scarcely be hazarded. Yet to justify the allegations that have been made, there ought surely to be, if not palpable proof, at least strong and plausible presumptions, that they are warranted by the facts of the case. But we think it can be shown to the satisfaction of every candid mind, that every presumption is opposed to the truth of these allegations. At the time now contemplated, we do not know, or believe, that Mr. Barnes had a personal enemy in the Presbytery—indeed if he has one now, it is unknown to us. He was a stranger, his whole theological education had been in the Seminary at Princeton, the favourite institution of those who opposed the prosecution of his call; there was not a single allegation against his moral character, and he was represented as a young man of eminent piety, whose labours had been crowned with a remarkable revival of religion. There was every thing, not only to exempt him from persecution, but to make him a favourite with every member of the Presbytery. Then, again, the congregation calling him was the oldest and wealthiest of the Presbyterian denomination in the city; and a number of its members were of high standing, and of great influence among their fellow citizens; and they were likely to be greatly dissatisfied and disobliged, if the Presbytery should refuse them the pastor of their choice. In these circumstances, the opposers of Mr. Barnes' settlement in Philadelphia, must have been the strangest persecutors that ever existed on earth, if it was a spirit of persecution that prompted their opposition. No, verily, they knew full well, that they were exposing themselves to persecution—to the persecution of the tongue, and of a powerful influence, in every way in which it could affect them, if they took the part they did take. Seldom, when actual martyrdom was not hazarded, were men called to deny them-

selves, more sensibly and severely, than did those who voted to arrest the call which was prepared for Mr. Barnes. Why then, it will be asked, did they endeavour to arrest it? The answer is ready; and it is the only one which, with any show of fairness or probability, can be given. It was to preserve a good conscience; it was to fulfil their ordination vow; “to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account.” Here was the true and only motive, which influenced those who opposed the settlement of Mr. Barnes. He had never preached to the people who had called him, and he was not present to afford the members of the Presbytery an opportunity for any examination of, or conversation with him, either as a judicatory, or as individuals. All the means of ascertaining his theological sentiments, on which they could safely rely, consisted of a printed sermon, entitled “The Way of Salvation.” His call by the congregation was chiefly grounded on this sermon, which had been circulated among the people; and on the favourable report of, we believe, three members who had visited him, and heard him preach at Morristown. This sermon, it was the solemn and deep conviction of those in the Presbytery who objected to forwarding his call, contained fundamental errors—errors affecting the very vitals of gospel truth, as set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. What these errors were, will be seen hereafter; but we sincerely believe that no pains or penalties whatever, could have induced those who opposed the call, to vote for its being approved and sent. The authorship of this sermon, let it be well noted, formed, in the minds of a number of the Presbytery, the *single*, but *insurmountable* obstacle, to the reception of Mr. Barnes as a fellow-member, and investing him with the pastoral office, over a people for whose spiritual welfare the Presbytery were bound to watch, under a fearful responsibility for their fidelity to the Great Head of the Church.

We proceed with our narrative. Mr. Barnes accepted the call which was sent him, and came to Philadelphia, bringing with him the usual certificate of good standing, in the Presbytery which he left. When that of Philadelphia met for his reception, and to take measures for his installation, those who had opposed his call, insisted on their right to question him, in regard to his doctrinal sentiments, and pleaded truly, that this had been admitted, in previous debate, as proper, before his admission to fellowship as a member of the Presbytery. But every idea of this kind was now most determinately resisted, both by himself and by those by whom his cause was advocated. The ground taken by them was, that his good standing in the Presbytery which he left, placed him in the same standing in the Presbytery to which he had come; and the motion that had been

made to examine him, after much and ardent debate, was negatived, 18 voting for it, and 20 against it. A proposition to table charges against him, founded on the false doctrine of his sermon, was overruled as out of order. A proposition to remit him for examination to the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, from which he had come, was negatived; although this had been previously indicated, by some of the majority, as the proper course; and the final vote to receive him was carried, 30 voting for it, and 16 against it.—His installation took place a few days afterwards. It ought to be mentioned, that on one occasion (it is not recollected whether it was immediately before or after the final vote) Mr. Barnes rose and stated, that although he had resisted the *right* to question him, yet he would *voluntarily* make some explanation of his doctrinal views. Yet in doing this, it is believed he did not occupy the floor for more than five minutes; and did not, and indeed in that time could not, make any explanation that was definite, or in any degree satisfactory.

In the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia in the city of Lancaster, the last week of October, about four months after the installation of Mr. Barnes, the minority of the Presbytery who had resisted that measure, preferred a complaint, in which they stated it as a grievance to themselves, and as dangerous to the purity and stability of the Church, that a man was received into their fellowship, and installed in a congregation for whose spiritual welfare they, as a part of the Presbytery, were bound to act the part of guardians, without their being permitted to ask him a single question, relative to his soundness in the faith; although this soundness had been, in their judgment, rendered exceedingly questionable, by a sermon which he had preached and published, and which had been circulated among the people over whom he was now placed as a pastor. The Synod spent nearly two days in hearing the parties, and in subsequent deliberations on the case. Every thing was conducted with great order, and strict impartiality. Mr. Barnes read before the Synod a long and elaborate paper, in defence of himself, and in explanation of what had been represented as the objectionable parts of his sermon. One noticeable incident during this trial, ought not to be passed over in silence. A member of Synod addressed to Mr. Barnes the following interrogatory, and nearly in the following words: "Mr. Barnes—It is stated in one of the answers of our Shorter Catechism, that 'The sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin.'—Mr. Barnes, do you believe this?" Answer—"I do not." Thus, in the face of the Synod, he explicitly denied one of the fundamental doctrines of our public Standards. The result of this trial is thus recorded in the minutes of the Synod—

"The Synod having considered the subject of the complaints preferred by some of the members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, relative to the proceedings of said Presbytery in the case of the Rev. A. Barnes, and heard the parties in the case, come to the following resolutions, viz:—

1. *Resolved*, That the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in not allowing the examination of Mr. Barnes in connection with his printed sermon, previously to his reception as a member of Presbytery, and especially before his installation as pastor of the first Presbyterian Church, gave just ground of complaint to the minority.

2. *Resolved*, That the complainants be referred back to the Presbytery of which they are members, with an injunction to that Presbytery, to hear and decide on their objections to the orthodoxy of the sermon of Mr. Barnes, and to take such order on the whole subject, as is required by a regard to the purity of the church, and its acknowledged doctrines and order."—The ayes and noes were called on these resolutions, when it appeared that on the first resolution, the ayes were 30, and the noes 8. On the second resolution the ayes were 28 and the noes 10.—As all the members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, being parties in this trial, had no vote on the foregoing resolutions, the large majorities in favour of the complainants, show what was the prevalent opinion of their brethren, after a full, fair, and patient hearing, of both the parties concerned. It must also be noted and remembered, in order to understand the subsequent proceedings, that after the decision of the Synod, the preceding majority and minority, in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, changed places—what had been the majority, and the supporters of Mr. Barnes, now became the minority; and the minority, that had opposed his reception, now became a decided majority. Does not this prove that the more his case was examined, the more untenable it was found?

In compliance with the resolutions of Synod, a meeting of the Presbytery, *pro re nata*, was called for the trial of Mr. Barnes. It was probably attended more numerously than any other meeting of this Presbytery that ever convened. It consisted of 59 members, 35 ministers, and 24 elders. The variety of shifts and evasions which were practised by the friends of Mr. Barnes, to prevent the examination of the points of false doctrine contained in his sermon, we shall not attempt to detail. We never witnessed any thing like it, till the last meeting of our Synod; when the same party reacted the same scenes, with some modifications, adapted to the circumstances of the occasion. The great plea was, that it was unconstitutional to examine and pronounce an opinion on this sermon, without tabling charges against the author, and subjecting him to a regular trial—a position, it will be remembered, that the last General Assembly virtually condemned, by expounding the constitu-

tion exactly as the majority did, at the time of this trial; that is, by declaring that it is proper, and may be expedient, to examine and decide on the doctrines of a publication, before the commencement of any prosecution against the author.* But the friends of Mr. Barnes entered a formal protest against this procedure; and he read a paper, requesting that he might be put on trial, on the specification of formal charges. Yet, when charges were offered to be tabled against him, before his installation, his friends, then a majority, overruled the proposition. But the Synod having now expressly enjoined "the Presbytery to hear and decide on their objections [those of the complainants] to the orthodoxy of the sermon of Mr. Barnes, and to take such order on the whole subject as is required by a regard to the purity of the Church, and its acknowledged doctrines and order," a strict obedience to this injunction was impracticable, without examining and deciding on the orthodoxy of this publication. Whether a prosecution of the author should, or should not, be commenced, was to be decided afterwards. But the friends of Mr. Barnes, when it was ultimately determined to examine the sermon as the primary proceeding, declared they would neither speak nor vote on the case; and Mr. Barnes asked and obtained leave to withdraw, although earnestly requested to remain, and to give every explanation he might think proper, on any part of his sermon, as it passed under review—but he was inflexible, and left the Presbytery.

We shall now give the result of the scrutiny into the orthodoxy of this far famed sermon; and we do hope, although the document is of considerable length, that our readers will do themselves, as well as us, the justice, to inspect narrowly every article, point by point, and judge for themselves, whether it be possible to reconcile the fairly quoted passages of Mr. Barnes' discourse, with the quotations from the doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church, with which they are contrasted—to see and judge, not merely whether the quotations do not differ, but whether they are not directly *opposite* and *contradictory*, and this on vital and fundamental points. The final decision was as follows viz:

FINAL DECISION.

"The Presbytery of Philadelphia, agreeably to the direction of the Synod at their recent meeting in Lancaster, having considered the sermon of the Revd. Albert Barnes, entitled the WAY OF SALVATION, are of the opinion that it contains speculations of dangerous tendency, on some of the principal points in Christian theology, and ought not therefore to be sanctioned as expressing that

view of the great truths of God's word, which the Presbyterian Church has uniformly adopted, and which is exhibited in their authorised Confession of Faith.

In stating the doctrine of *original* sin, the author employs a phraseology which is calculated to mislead, and which appears evidently to conflict with the spirit and letter of the standards of the Presbyterian Church.

1. He denies that the posterity of Adam are responsible or answerable for Adam's first sin, which he committed as the federal head of his race. Thus, p. 6, "Christianity does not charge on men crimes of which they are not guilty. It does not say, as I suppose, *that the sinner is held to be personally answerable for the transgressions of Adam, or of any other man.*"

Although the word *transgressions* is here used plurally, yet it is evident from the whole tenor of this division of the discourse, that the prime sin of Adam, which constituted his apostacy from God, is meant. Again, he says, p. 7, "Neither the facts, nor any proper inference from the facts affirm, that I am in either case *personally responsible for what another man (referring to Adam) did before I had an existence.*" And he explicitly declares, that if God had charged upon mankind such a responsibility, it would have been *clearly unjust*, vide p. 6. The doctrine of responsibility here impugned is clearly expressed, Ccn. of F. chap. vi. 6. "Every sin, both *original* and actual, being a *transgression* of the righteous law of God and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal."

2. In accordance with the above doctrine, that mankind are not responsible for Adam's sin, he affirms, p. 7, that "Christianity affirms the fact, that in connection with the sin of Adam, or as a *result*, all *moral-agents* will sin, and sinning will die." And then proceeds to explain the principle upon which the universality of sin is to be accounted for, by representing it to be the result of Adam's sin, in the same sense, as the misery of a drunkard's family is the result of his intemperance. Here it would seem, the author maintains that the same relationship subsists between every man and his family, as subsisted between Adam and his posterity; that the same principle of moral government applies to both cases alike, or in other words, that mankind hold no other relationship to Adam, than that of children to a natural progenitor.

The public federal or representative character of Adam is thus denied, contrary to the explicit statement in the answer to the 22 Q. of Larg. Cat. "The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity; all mankind descending from him by ordi-

* As the minutes of the Assembly are not yet published, we cannot give the very words of the decision; but its purport we are confident we have given correctly.

nary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in that first transgression."

3. He declares, p. 7. that "the notion of imputing sin is an invention of modern times," contrary to Con. of F. Chap. vi. 3, "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation."

4. In p. 5, he admits that his language on the subject of original sin differs from that used by the Confession of Faith on the same subject, and then accounts for this difference, on the ground of the difficulty of affixing any clear and definite meaning to the expression "we sinned *in* him and fell *with* him." This expression he considers, as far as it is capable of interpretation, as "intended to convey the idea, not that the sin of Adam is imputed to us, or set over to our account, but that there was a personal *identity* constituted between Adam and his posterity, so that it was really *our* act, and *ours only*, after all, that is chargeable on us.

The whole of this statement is exceedingly incautious and improper. The language of the Confession of Faith on one of the cardinal doctrines is held up as obscure and unintelligible, or, if possessing any meaning, as expressing an absurdity. The framers of this confession are charged with the absurdity of maintaining the personal identity between Adam and his posterity, when their language conveys no more than a federal or representative relationship. This whole view of the doctrine of original sin, is, in the opinion of the Presbytery, obscure, perplexed, fruitful of dangerous consequences, and therefore, censurable.

The statements of this sermon on the doctrine of Atonement, are also, in the opinion of Presbytery, in some important features, erroneous, and contrary to the orthodox views.

1. At p. 11. He says "this atonement was for all men. It was an offering made for the race. It had not respect so much to individuals, as to the law and perfections of God. It was an opening of the way of pardon, a making forgiveness consistent, a preservation of truth, a magnifying of the law, and had no particular reference to any class of men."

Here it is denied that the atonement had any special relation to the elect, which it had not also to the non-elect. But if it be true that the atonement offered by Christ, had no "respect to individuals," "no particular reference to any class of men," upon what principle can it be regarded as a satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men? or in what proper sense can Christ be considered as a vicarious sacrifice? unless the atonement be a satisfaction for the sins of individuals, upon what principle can it open the way of pardon, make forgiveness consistent, preserve truth or magnify the law? The special reference of

the atonement to a chosen people, in opposition to this view, is taught Con. of F. cap. viii. 5. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the Eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father had given unto him." Again, in answer to Q. 44 L. C. "Christ executeth the office of a Priest in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people," &c.

2. At p. 11. He says "the atonement of itself secured the salvation of no one;" and again "The atonement secured the salvation of no one, except as God had promised his Son that he should see of the travail of his soul, and except on the condition of repentance and faith." This language is incautious and calculated to mislead; as it seems to imply that the atonement of itself does not secure its own application, and therefore may, by possibility, fail in its design. It is improper to suspend its efficacy upon conditions, when the conditions themselves are the results of its efficacy, see Con. of F. chap. viii. 8. "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey," &c.

3. At p. 10. He unequivocally denies that Christ endured the penalty of the law. "He did not indeed endure the penalty of the law, for his sufferings were not eternal, nor did he endure remorse of conscience; but he endured so much suffering, bore so much agony, that the Father was pleased to accept of it, in the place of the eternal torments of all that should be saved." Here it seems to be inculcated that Christ did not satisfy the precise claims which a violated law had upon the sinner, but that he did what might be considered a substitute for such satisfaction; or it is implied that God remitted or waived the original claim, and accepted of something less. And that this is the sentiment of the author, is evident from his language p. 11. "Christ's sufferings were severe, more severe than those of *any mortal* before or since; but they bore, so far as we can see, only a very distant resemblance to the pains of hell. the proper penalty of the law. Nor is it possible to conceive that the sufferings of a *few hours*, however severe, could equal pains, though far less intense, eternally prolonged. Still less that the sufferings of human nature in a single instance, for the divine nature could not suffer, should be equal to the eternal pain of many millions." Here it is affirmed that Christ was *not capable* of enduring that penalty which the justice of God had exacted of the sinner, that his sufferings bore a very distant resemblance to it,

and by consequence that the penalty of the law has been either relaxed or is yet unpaid, and that the justice of God has waived its original demand, or is yet unsatisfied.

The whole of this language seems derogatory to Christ as an all sufficient Redeemer; it judges of the human nature of Christ as if it were a common human nature, it leaves out of view the infinite support which the divine nature was capable of imparting to the human nature of Christ, and is very different from the view of this subject given by the framers of our standards, in the answer to the 38 Q. of L. C. "It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the *infinite wrath of God*, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice," &c. &c.

In discoursing on human ability, the sermon contains expressions which do not seem to be well judged. In p. 14, it is said, "it is not to any want of physical strength that this rejection is owing, for men have power enough in themselves, to hate both God and their fellow men, and it requires less physical power to love God than to hate him;" and on the same page he represents man's inability as solely in the will; and on p. 30, that men are not saved simply because they *will not* be saved. Here physical ability is represented as competent to the performance of a moral action, which is an improper application of terms, and human inability as resulting merely from the will, and not from total depravity, which is contrary to Confession Faith, chap. vi. 4. "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions," and Confession of Faith, chap. ix. 3. "Man, by his fall, into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so, as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead to sin, is not able by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

Still further, the language of the sermon, on the subject of conformity to the standards of the church, if sanctioned, would give to every individual, after adopting these standards, the liberty of dissenting from them as much, and as often, as he might desire. Thus p. 6 he says, "It is not denied that this language varies from the statements which are often made on this subject, and from the opinion which has been entertained by many. And, it is admitted, that it does not accord with that used on the same subject in the Confession of Faith, and other standards of doctrine." And again, p. 12. "The great principle on which the author supposes the truths of religion are to be preached, and on which he endeavours to act is, that the Bible is to be interpreted by all the ho-

nest helps within the reach of the preacher, and then proclaimed as it is, let it lead where it will, within, or without the circumference of any arrangement of doctrines. He is supposed to be responsible, not at all for its impinging on any theological system; nor is he to be cramped by any frame work of Faith that has been reared around the Bible." This language would seem to imply, that an individual may enter the bosom of a church by a public reception of its creed, and continue in the communion of that church, although he should subsequently discover that its creed was not founded on the word of God. Whilst the liberty of every man to accept or reject any particular creed, is fully acknowledged by this Presbytery, yet they do deny, that any minister, whilst he remains in the communion of the Presbyterian Church, has a right to impugn its creed, or to make a public declaration that he is not bound by its authority.

In fine, a *whole view* of this discourse seems to warrant the belief, that the grand and fundamental doctrine of justification, as held by the Protestant Reformers, and taught clearly and abundantly in the standards of the Presbyterian Church, is really not held, but denied in this sermon. For the imputation of Adam's sin is denied; and the endurance of the penalty of the law by Christ, is denied; and any special reference of the atonement to the elect of God, is denied; and the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious ground of our acquittal and acceptance with God, is not once mentioned, although the text of the discourse naturally points to the doctrine: and when it is considered that the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, and the imputation of the sins of God's people to their surety Saviour, and the imputation of his finished righteousness to them, do all rest upon the same ground, and must all stand or fall together, and that it has been found in fact, that those who deny one of these, do generally deny the whole, and to be consistent, must necessarily do so, it is no forced conclusion, but one which seems inevitable, that the sermon does really reject the doctrine of justification, as held by the Reformers, and as taught in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; that it does not teach as the answer to the question on justification in our Shorter Catechism asserts, that "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, *only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*"

It is not satisfactory, that the sermon says, that "Christ died in the place of sinners;" that it speaks of "the merits of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ"—of "the love of Christ," of "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ," of being "willing to drop into the hands of Jesus, and to be saved by his merit alone," of God, "sprinkling on the soul the blood of Jesus, and freely pardoning all its sins," since this language may be used, and is ac-

tually used, by some who explicitly deny, that Christ took the law place of sinners, bore the curse of God's law in their room and stead, and that they are saved only by the imputation to them of his perfect righteousness.

On the whole, the Presbytery express their deep regret, that Mr. Barnes should have preached and published a discourse, so highly objectionable, and so manifestly, in some of its leading points, opposed to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church; they earnestly recommend to Mr. Barnes, to reconsider and renounce the erroneous matter contained in his printed sermon, as specified in the foregoing decisions of Presbytery: and with a view to afford time to Mr. Barnes for reflection and reconsideration, in reference to the errors of his sermon, and for opportunity for such of the brethren, as may choose to converse freely with him on the subject, the Presbytery do suspend their final decision on the case, until their next stated meeting."

It was then moved by Mr. Engles, "that Dr. Green, Mr. McCalla, and Mr. Latta, be a committee to wait on Mr. Barnes, to communicate to him the result of the deliberations of this Presbytery in the examination of his sermon, and to converse with him freely and affectionately, on the points excepted to in that sermon; in the hope and expectation, that the interview will result in removing or diminishing the difficulties which have arisen in his case; and that they report at the next meeting of Presbytery."

Let candour say, whether the spirit of persecution is discoverable in this award of Presbytery. Is not its whole language, manner, and substance, marked with moderation, caution, and even kindness? Can it be denied that the quotations are fairly made from the sermon? and if fairly made, what orthodox man will say that they did not demand animadversion? and in what form, we ask, could animadversion be more tenderly expressed? On the other hand, can any thing be more evident, than that evasions, from first to last, were practised, to prevent the bringing of the doctrines of the sermon to a fair comparison with what is set forth in the Standards of the church.

We wish to add here, that those who are desirous to understand the *whole case* of Mr. Barnes, will do well to mark attentively, the objectionable points of doctrine in his sermon, as stated in the decision of the Presbytery. They will be found to be the very same, which we shall show, are prominent in his notes on the Romans, for which he is now under suspension by the Synod.—There is indeed more in the notes than in the sermon, but the most objectionable points are the same in both. Hence it appears, that after the space of five years for review and reconsideration, he adheres steadfastly to the unsound doctrinal errors he has adopted.—Time has only served to confirm him in them, and to determine him, at all hazards, to teach, publish, and endeavour to dif-

fuse them, as extensively as possible. Scarcely a hope is left that he will either change them, or forbear to propagate them to the utmost of his ability. Will this be permitted in the Presbyterian church? The next General Assembly will decide the important question.

To return to our narrative. The committee appointed by the Presbytery to converse with Mr. Barnes "freely and affectionately, on the points excepted to in his sermon," attempted to perform the duty assigned them. They went together to the study of Mr. Barnes; but after receiving them courteously, he refused to hold any conversation with them as a committee, on the subject of their appointment, but said he would be willing to converse with them as individuals in private. After remaining with him about an hour, when they rose to depart, he delivered to them a paper, in which he had stated in writing the ground of his refusal; which was, in substance, that he considered the whole proceedings of the Presbytery in his case, since the decision of the Synod, as unconstitutional, and therefore could do no act that might seem to imply its legality. The committee made their report to the Presbytery, and delivered in Mr. Barnes' written answer, at the stated meeting in April, 1831. After much discussion, it was resolved, that without farther action on the case of Mr. Barnes at that time, it should be referred, together with several points of constitutional order, which the discussion on his case had elicited, to the General Assembly, which was to sit in the following month.

To prevent the members of the Presbytery who now formed the majority, from retaining their representation in the Assembly, to which they would have been entitled if the case had gone up merely as a reference, the New School members contrived (for it really required contrivance) to connect with the reference two or three complaints, against the proceedings in the matters referred; thus giving to the whole the character of a case demanding a judicial process, and of course depriving the Presbytery, as a party, of a vote on the merits of the question, in the court of the last resort. The manner in which the New School majority of this Assembly was secured, has already been indicated; and most faithfully did that majority act the part for which they were chosen. After regularly constituting the court, for the trial in which the complainants had made Mr. Barnes a party on the one side, and the Presbytery a party on the other, they heard the voluminous documents which related to the case; and when those were finished, the representatives of the Presbytery were surprised with a proposal from their opponents, to leave the case to the decision of the court, without argument. A little time was asked to deliberate on this proposition, but the Moderator, Dr. Beman, declared that none could be allowed—the decision must be made without delay: and thus, taken by surprise,

the Presbyterian representatives (indiscreetly as we think) consented to submit the case to the court without argument. As soon as this took place, a motion, which had previously been made without success, was renewed, which was, to submit the whole case to a committee. This committee the Moderator forthwith appointed, putting on it one of the Connecticut delegation, a resident of New Haven.

In the appointment of this committee, it will be observed, there was a total departure from the usual course in a judicial process; and this departure was still more flagrant, when the committee reported. Although the constitution of the church expressly requires, that in cases of appeal "the clerk shall call the roll, that every member may have an opportunity to express his opinion of the case," this provision was totally disregarded. The roll was not called, and all discussion on the report of the committee was discouraged by the Moderator, and nothing of the kind took place. The resolutions of the committee were adopted almost without remark, and entirely without amendment. Thus, after a regular trial was commenced, in place of being carried through, it was dropped; and this without the consent, and contrary to the wishes of the Presbytery. The Assembly converted itself into a body, resembling the associations of the Congregational churches in New England: and this was boasted of, in a publication issued by the member from New Haven, in reply to some remarks which had been published, on the impropriety of his appointment as a member of this committee. Along with much in the same style, he tauntingly says: "I could not but ask within myself, what is this lauded system of power and jurisdiction worth—these judicatures, court rising above court, in regular gradation what are they worth, if you are afraid to try your system in the hour of need? . . . And when the Assembly and the parties* at last acceded to that proposal, I supposed that the general conviction was, that it was best to go to work on that occasion, in something like the Congregational way, rather than in the Presbyterian way." Reproaches that can neither be denied or repelled, are more grievous and mortifying than any other, and into this predicament the Assembly of 1831, had, in the case of Mr. Barnes, placed themselves, and the constitution of the church which they represented. Several questions, relative to the construction of the constitution, in which not only the Presbytery of Philadelphia, but every other Presbytery in the church, were deeply interested, were at this time, referred for decision to the Assembly. These

* This is incorrect. One of the parties, the representation of the Presbytery, never acceded to the proposal to have their case determined in the way it was issued. On the contrary, they felt deeply aggrieved by being deprived of a regular trial, according to the express provision of the constitution.

were evaded altogether; "the committee being of the opinion that, if they be answered, they had better be discussed and decided *in thesi*, separate from the case of Mr. Barnes." And why, we ask, "separate from the case of Mr. Barnes." Could a just answer to constitutional questions affect Mr. Barnes? Yes, and for that reason, beyond a question, they were waived at this time. Several of them have since been decided, so as to show that if they had been answered, in connection with the pending case of discipline, they would have affected it very materially. Two of these questions were never answered, till the last Assembly. One related to the constitutional right of a Presbytery to examine a member applying for admission, and bringing with him a certificate of good standing with the Presbytery which he has left.—The other was, whether it is constitutional to examine and pronounce on a publication, without, when practicable, commencing a prosecution, in the first instance, against the author.

The following were the resolutions passed in the case of Mr. Barnes:

"1. Resolved, That the General Assembly, while it appreciates the conscientious zeal for the purity of the church, by which the Presbytery of Philadelphia is believed to have been actuated, in its proceedings in the case of Mr. Barnes; and while it judges that the sermon by Mr. Barnes, entitled, 'The Way of Salvation,' contains a number of unguarded and objectionable passages; yet is of the opinion, that, especially after the explanations which were given by him of those passages, the Presbytery ought to have suffered the whole to pass without further notice.

"2. Resolved, That in the judgment of this Assembly, the Presbytery of Philadelphia ought to suspend all further proceedings in the case of Mr. Barnes.

"3. Resolved, That it will be expedient, as soon as the regular steps can be taken, to divide the Presbytery in such way, as will be best calculated to promote the peace of the ministers and churches belonging to the Presbytery."

We wish it may be noticed and remembered, that even in these resolutions, passed by a New School General Assembly, the belief of that Assembly is explicitly declared, that in "the proceedings of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in the case of Mr. Barnes," that Presbytery were actuated by "a conscientious zeal for the purity of the church." This, surely, is something a good deal different from a spirit of persecution and bigotry. We wish another circumstance may be noted in these resolutions; and that is, that Mr. Barnes, although prosecution against him was arrested, got a hint, which it were well if he had remembered, when he wrote his Notes on the Epistle to the Romans. The hint is, that the Assembly "judged that the sermon of Mr. Barnes, entitled 'The Way of Salvation,' contained a number of unguarded and objectionable passages."

We go on with our narrative. With some reference to the last of the foregoing resolutions,

the Presbytery of Philadelphia, at their first stated meeting after the rising of the Assembly, determined, by a considerable majority, to divide the Presbytery, much as it has since been divided, by the line of Market street. The New School members of the Presbytery were not content with this; and if we rightly recollect, pleaded, as we think they might, that such a division as the majority petitioned for, would not fulfil the intention of the Assembly, in their last resolution. In a word, here was the origin of *elective Presbyteries*, and the name which one of the New School members then gave them. These members, therefore, got up a counter petition to the Synod, requesting a division that would put them altogether into a Presbytery by themselves. Both these petitions were brought before the Synod, which very shortly afterward met in Baltimore; but the Synod, after an animated and prolonged discussion, determined not to grant the prayer of either of the petitions, and that the Presbytery should remain as it was, without a division. Of this the New School members complained to the Assembly, and petitioned that body to do what the Synod had refused. The Assembly of 1832, to which the complaint and petition were addressed, was the most numerous that ever met in our church, consisting of 320 members—both parties having laboured, through the preceding year, to bring out all their strength. After a debate which was continued through a whole week, the New School petition for an elective Presbytery, was granted; including not only those who had petitioned the Synod, but several who never before had petitioned any judicatory on this subject. So that the Assembly, after granting what the Synod had refused, acted as a court of original jurisdiction, having the power to divide and form Presbyteries. This was believed by the Synod, and by many not of the Synod, to be plainly unconstitutional; since the constitution gives to the Synod the power "to erect new Presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected," and it specifies no such powers as belonging to the General Assembly. The doctrine contended for by the opposers of the elective affinity Presbytery was, that when a constitution or law, either civil or ecclesiastical, specifies certain powers as belonging to a particular body or corporation, and does not specify the same or similar powers, as belonging to another body, whose existence it recognises and whose prerogatives it specifies, the former body possesses its specified powers **EXCLUSIVELY**, and the latter body cannot, by any construction of its prerogatives, lawfully invade or exercise those powers. It was also warmly urged, that the constitution defines a Presbytery to "consist of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district;" and that in forming the contemplated elective Presbytery, the constitution would unavoidably be infringed; in as

much as two Presbyteries would exist within the same district, and therefore each of those Presbyteries could not include *all* the ministers and congregations within that district. The Assembly notwithstanding, did form the elective Presbytery petitioned for, and it went into speedy and vigorous action.

The Synod of Philadelphia which met in the autumn of this year (1832) refused to recognise, as a constituent part of that body, the elective Presbytery created by the Assembly; and they adopted a remonstrance, addressed to the Assembly of the following year, against the act by which such a Presbytery had been formed, and appointed a committee to represent and plead the cause of the Synod, when it should come before the supreme judicatory. The Presbytery of Philadelphia, also presented a remonstrance, at the same time, against what they considered as an unlawful and injurious division of their body. The elective Presbytery, on their part, complained to the General Assembly of the treatment they had received from the Synod, in not recognising them as a Presbytery. When the papers in which these conflicting views came before the Assembly (1833) they were, together with two other complaints from individuals, relative to the same cause, referred to a committee, called in the minutes "the committee of compromise." The committee reported that they had seen and conversed with the members, or representatives, of the elective Presbytery, and with thirty one members of the Synod of Philadelphia, and recommended to the Assembly the following resolution, viz.

"Resolved, That the complainants in those cases have leave to withdraw their complaints, and that the consideration of all the papers, relating to the 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia, be indefinitely postponed. The Assembly then united in prayer, returning thanks to God, for his goodness in bringing this matter to such an amicable adjustment." Notwithstanding all this appearance of cordiality, and the final settlement of the controversy, it afterwards appeared, that the representatives of the Synod had never consented, but were entirely and inflexibly opposed to the report of the committee, and that the chairman of that committee had made every effort in his power to get a written remonstrance against the whole proceeding brought before the Assembly, but that his request was denied and his paper not permitted to be read.

When the Synod met at Columbia, Pa. in the Fall of this year (1834) and heard the report of their committee, there was a difference of opinion, as to the best course to be pursued, to get rid of the elective affinity Presbytery; but there were very few members present, who were not entirely of one mind, that in some way or other the evil was to be abated. The measures that were finally adopted are expressed in the following resolutions.

"Whereas, the Report of the Committee appoint-

ed by the last Assembly, to whom was referred the complaint of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, was founded in the apprehension of that Presbytery and of the Committee, that said Presbytery would be received by this Synod at its present meeting, as a constituent member:

Therefore, *Resolved*, 1. That while this Synod reprobate and condemn both the principle on which the Presbytery of Philadelphia was divided, and also the exercise of unwarrantable authority by the Assembly in dividing the Presbytery; and while the Synod expressly forbid any act of theirs in this matter, to be considered as sanctioning either the principle or the act above alluded to and condemned, yet, regarding the peculiar circumstances of this case, and with the above declarations of Synod, the Synod do hereby receive the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, as a constituent member of this body.

2. *Resolved*, That in the exercise of the right of Synod to divide and unite Presbyteries, this Synod do hereby unite the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia with the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and ordain the two Presbyteries thus united to be known as the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

3. *Resolved*, That in the exercise of the same prerogative, the Synod do hereby divide the said Presbytery of Philadelphia by the line of Market street in the city of Philadelphia, extending as far east as may be necessary, and west to the Schuylkill, then up the Schuylkill to the extremity of the Presbytery; and that the ministers and churches south of said line be known as the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and those of the north side be known as the second Presbytery of Philadelphia."

As usual, the elective Presbytery came forward to the next General Assembly (1834), with both a complaint and an appeal. A discussion ensued which (with intervals for attending to other objects) lasted for about ten days. The details are too long to be specified, and are indeed not material to a correct understanding of the issue. That issue was, that the complaint and appeal were both sustained, the vote on the former being Ayes 118, Nays 57, on the latter, Ayes 90, Nays 81. A strong protest against this decision was entered by the minority, and answered by a committee appointed by the house. We regret to be obliged by our limits to omit these important papers. But the Assembly did not rest here. Having found that the Synod of Philadelphia was irreconcilably opposed to the principle of elective affinity, in the constitution of the judicatories of the church, and never would admit a Presbytery formed on this principle as one of its constituent parts, the measure was adopted of forming a Synod on the same principle, or one at least in which the elective Presbytery, already in existence, should have a dominant influence. Such a Synod was accordingly formed, consisting of the elective Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the Presbyteries

of Wilmington and Lewes. And in answer to an inquiry, publicly made and answered in the house at the time, it appeared that the elective Presbytery of Philadelphia contained *seven or eight members, more than both the other Presbyteries put together*; so that it was manifest, that the Synod was formed, not only for the accommodation of this Presbytery, but that, virtually, this Presbytery was itself erected into a Synod. The Presbyteries of Wilmington and Lewes, were also abstracted from the Synod of Philadelphia, not only without consulting it, but contrary to its known wishes.

Two other extraordinary doings of this Assembly, as having some connection with the case of Mr. Barnes, must be noticed here. A respectful and very able memorial was presented to the house, prepared by a number of brethren in the distant West,* and in which they stated that the sentiments of members of thirteen Presbyteries in that region, had been consulted. This Memorial had been previously circulated in a pamphlet form and had been taken up, acted on and adopted, according to the report of the Committee of Overtures, "by eight Presbyteries, eleven church Sessions, fifty two ministers, and twenty-four elders, and in part by other Presbyteries."—The Presbytery of Philadelphia had adopted it unanimously. The Memorial purported to be "on the present state of the Presbyterian church under the care of the General Assembly;" and it laid open in a plain and masterly, but respectful manner, the appalling and numerous errors, abuses and unconstitutional measures, which had found their way into the church; and it called on the Assembly, in very urgent language, for a corrective of these evils. This Memorial was treated with marked indignity. It was not even permitted to be read, (though its reading was repeatedly urged,) till it had been committed, and reported on, with every mark of disapprobation: And when it was at last read, some of the members went out of the house, and others manifested their dislike, not to say their scorn, by indications not to be mistaken. Not one of the reforms requested was granted; and the opportunity was taken to decide two points of constitutional law—which decisions, as being unconstitutional, were reversed by the last Assembly. The first point was the one on which Mr. Barnes and his advocates had rested all their pleas against his being examined or questioned, when he joined the Philadelphia Presbytery; namely, That clean papers place a man, in any Presbytery to which he may go, in the same good standing which he held in the Presbytery that he has left—consequently, that all inquiry in

* It was originally signed by sixteen ministers and twenty-three elders, and was addressed, "to the Moderator and members of the Presbyterian church in the United States, to meet in the city of Philadelphia, on the 15th of May, 1834."

regard to his orthodoxy is completely barred. The second point was, that no publication can be lawfully condemned, as containing heresy or unsound doctrine, without first commencing a prosecution against its author, if he be known and accessible. The maintenance of this unconstitutional principle had furnished another main plea of Mr. Barnes and his favourers, in withholding his published sermon from a judicial scrutiny. There were other points on which this Assembly passed decisions of a very exceptionable kind, but we have not space to notice them specifically. Protests, powerful and unanswerable, were offered by the minority against what was done in disposing of the memorial, but they produced no salutary effect. There was indeed, a recklessness in the course pursued by the majority of this Assembly, and an utter disregard of the feelings and remonstrances of the minority, which we have never seen on any other occasion, in the supreme judicatory of our church. But what made the cup of bitterness overflow, was the absolute refusal, even to admit or notice on the minutes, a motion made by a western member, for the Assembly to bear testimony against the numerous and fundamental errors prevalent in our country and church, which he specified in his motion; and the most important of which were enumerated and condemned by the last General Assembly.

Such were the proceedings which thoroughly ratified the minority, that they could expect, and the church could expect, no redress of grievances, and no measures calculated to arrest and counteract the evils which threatened to subvert our whole ecclesiastical system, till our supreme judiciary should possess an essentially different character from that of the existing General Assembly; and which had, in a considerable degree, belonged to all its predecessors from 1831 to 1834, both these years inclusive. It was under the solemn impression of this conviction, that the minority of the Assembly, in concert with some other brethren who were providentially present in Philadelphia, and who had, in part, witnessed the oppressive and erroneous course of the majority, drew up and passed that Act and Testimony, which, under the blessing of God, had a happy influence in contributing to bring into the General Assembly of last year an overwhelming majority of Old School members, and to restore to that body its former character, as the guardian of the purity of the church, and the corrector of the errors which destroy its peace and order.

In giving the foregoing narrative, we desire it may be distinctly understood, that we do not impute to Mr. Barnes the originating and fostering of all the errors, which, for five years past, have threatened to deluge our church. Such has not been our intention, for such we know has not been the fact. The truth is, that *New Schoolism*, had long been sapping the orthodoxy of our church,

and was ripe for an explosion, when the case of Mr. Barnes occurred, and served as a well adapted torch to spring the mine. He has ever since been connected with the party who then arrayed themselves in his favour, and who have continued to make his case a rallying point for their forces; but we do not charge on him all the monstrous aberrations and absurdities, into which some of his party have run. This would be such an impeachment of his principles, good sense, taste and discretion, as we are persuaded ought not to be made. We consider him as, in a high degree, an errorist, but he is not a weak, deluded and reckless fanatic. We lament his want of orthodoxy, but we respect his understanding. How he or any other man, who holds the opinions which he certainly does hold, can conscientiously retain his standing in the Presbyterian church, under a disguise of his real sentiments, is what we cannot discern; but beyond this, his moral character, so far as known to us, is unimpeachable.

We have already cursorily noticed some of the measures of the General Assembly of the last year, by which certain unconstitutional and pernicious acts and decisions of the preceding year were rescinded. But among the various reforms, which will render memorable the doings of the Assembly of 1835, none were more important than the testimony borne against the heretical errors which had become rampant in our church, and the annihilation of the elective affinity judicatures, by which those errors were protected and propagated. This latter act was thus expressed:—

“Resolved, That at and after the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, in October next, the Synod of Delaware shall be dissolved, and the Presbyteries constituting the same shall be, then and thereafter, annexed to the Synod of Philadelphia: and that the Synod of Philadelphia, thus constituted by the union aforesaid, shall take such order concerning the organization of its several Presbyteries, as may be deemed expedient and constitutional:—and that said Synod, if it shall deem it desirable, make application to the next General Assembly, for such a division of the Synod as may best suit the conveniences of all its Presbyteries, and promote the glory of God.”

A true copy from the minutes,

EZRA STILES ELY,
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

In conformity with this resolution of the General Assembly, the Synod of Philadelphia having met, agreeably to the adjournment of the former year, at York, in Pennsylvania, received into their connection, as a constituent part of their body, the Synod of Delaware, consisting of the Assembly's 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the Presbyteries of Wilmington and Lewes. But when the Stated Clerks of the Synod of Delaware and of the several Presbyteries of which it had been composed, were required to resign their records to the Synod of Philadelphia, of which they were

now a part, they positively and pertinaciously refused to obey the requisition; alleging that the General Assembly had continued the Synod of Delaware in existence till the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia; had not ordered that their records should be surrendered to that Synod; and that as the Presbyteries had been amenable to their own Synod till the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, it could not be supposed that they were amenable to two Synods at the same time. That all this was mere quibble and evasion is evident, not only from the plain import and design of the General Assembly's resolution above recited, but also from the previous acts of the Synod of Delaware itself, and the Presbyteries of which it was composed. It appeared that the records of these several bodies had actually been brought forward to this meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia; and it was admitted by Mr. Barnes that he had come prepared to answer to a prosecution against him before the Synod of Philadelphia, and that he had never heard of the plea now made by his Presbytery against the jurisdiction of this Synod in his case, till he arrived in this place; yet he did not choose to dissent from his brethren, since they had thought proper to make this plea.

We have indeed heard, since the rising of the Synod, that there was a conference of some of the New School members, before their arrival in York, in which the measures eventually adopted were planned. If this were so, the plan, we have no doubt, was to go into operation only on the contingency, which eventually took place—that the Synod should be found to consist of a majority of orthodox members. The truth is, the New School members of the Synod of Delaware, had fondly cherished the delusive, but confident expectation, that when they should be amalgamated with the Synod of Philadelphia, they would prove to be a majority of that body, would overrule their opponents, and dispose of the case of Mr. Barnes, and every thing else in the proceedings of the Synod, in a manner most agreeable to their wishes. To make this sure, they brought forward every individual they could muster, and the Presbytery of Wilmington ordained one licensed candidate, who was under the frowns of another Presbytery, even after they arrived at York. But all their hopes of a majority were blasted at once, by the vote for Moderator of Synod. By that vote they saw clearly, that instead of having a majority in the Synod, they would not only be in a minority, but that minority a small one. Then, and not till then, they determined to withhold their records, (in accordance, it may be, with a preconcerted plan) and to make the plea we have stated. There cannot be a reasonable doubt, that if they had been, as they hoped to be, the majority of the Synod, their records would all have been surrendered without hesitation; the case of Mr. Barnes would have been tried and issued, as it had been in the court below; and the Presbyteries would

have been all arranged to their mind. Now, what are we to think of men who can act in this manner? who will change a right and reasonable course of action, which they had deliberately purposed to pursue, because they perceive it will not terminate agreeably to their wishes? who will plead and inflexibly insist on objections, with a view to embarrass, and if possible, to prevent and defeat a trial in a court of the Lord Jesus Christ—objections which would never have been heard of, if that trial could have been, as they had hoped it would be, ordered and issued by themselves? Do such men act conscientiously? Who can believe it?

No one, not a spectator of what took place in the last meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, can have any adequate conception of the ingenuity, or disingenuity rather, which was employed by the friends of Mr. Barnes, either to prevent his trial altogether, or if they should not succeed in this, to give it the character of an *ex parte* and *oppressive proceeding*. Much of this will appear to any attentive reader of the minutes of the Synod, and still more from a perusal of the report of a stenographer, which has been published in some of the religious newspapers. But both together, give but a very imperfect view of what was witnessed, by those present on the occasion. It seemed as if there was to be no end of the devices, manœuvres, objections and evasions, by which delay was produced and embarrassment created. It was said by a member who had spoken with peculiar kindness of Mr. Barnes—"it is enough to exhaust the patience of Job." Yet it is not true, as has been represented, that the Synod was disorderly. With the exception of one outrageous speech and action of a single New School man, there was as much order as perhaps can ever be preserved, in a deliberative Assembly of 249 members, when under the excitement of ardent and deeply interesting discussion—far better order than has too often been seen wanting in the General Assembly.

The Synod felt it to be an imperious duty which they owned to the church, to issue the case of Mr. Barnes, notwithstanding all the obstacles which were thrown in their way. Several members, who came to the Synod under the full impression that the best course would be to send up the appeal to the Assembly, without deciding on it in the Synod, changed their opinion. Never, perhaps, has there been, in this country, a Synod in which the lay representation was proportionably so large. It appeared that throughout the whole Synodical bounds, a decision was looked for, and, in some places, earnestly demanded; and that to refuse it, would be considered as a reproachful shrinking from an unpleasant duty; and would leave the whole subject in suspense for the ensuing half year. Nor was it by any means certain, if the case went up to the Assembly without Synodical action, that the Assembly would not, as

had been done in other cases, send it back to the Synod; and then a whole year would elapse without a decision of any kind. To act in this case by the Synod, was clearly most in accordance with the spirit and design of the constitution; for there was plainly nothing special in the case, except that it had made much noise, and that the object of the prosecution was the pastor of a large and wealthy congregation in the city of Philadelphia,—considerations which certainly ought to have no influence to deter a court of the Lord Jesus Christ from performing its duty. That such considerations do, in fact, too often operate powerfully, must be acknowledged, to the shame of the church. It is to the praise of the Synod, that they did not operate to deter from the trial of Mr. Barnes. Well are we persuaded, that if his case had been that of an obscure country minister, he would long since have been put out of the Presbyterian church, without a clamorous disturbance of its peace and unity. The influence of wealth and station has been the bane of the Christian church, in every period of her history. In cases of discipline, especially, it is peculiarly difficult to resist it.

Mr. Barnes, it is our opinion, suffered no injury, from the withholding by his Presbytery of the minutes in which his trial and acquittal were recorded. The identical charges on which he had been tried, with distinct references to those parts of our doctrinal standards with which they were in conflict, and to the award of the Presbytery, with the reasons by which it was attempted to be justified, were all before the Synod, verified on oath. The book, for the false doctrine of which he was prosecuted, was likewise present, and the objectionable parts had been carefully read and considered by many of the members. The quotations of the prosecutor, had he been so disposed, could not be unfairly made. Any attempt of the kind, would only have prejudiced his cause, when the document quoted was at hand to confront him. But so far as we have seen, or heard, the fairness of the quotations has never been questioned. Now, when this was the state of facts, what did Mr. Barnes lack, in his trial before the Synod? Nothing but a speech of explanations, with considerations addressed to the feelings more than to the understanding and judgment of the court. But not to insist, as we reasonably might, that his not pleading was really wholly chargeable on himself and on his Presbytery, since he was both permitted and urged to make his defence—we verily believe his silence did him no injury. We have been truly surprised to see the influence that *explanations*, as they are called, have had in our ecclesiastical courts—we remember that they were referred to with an *especially*, when the New School Assembly of 1831, cleared Mr. Barnes, with only a slight censure. But we are persuaded that explanations, if he had made them, would have had little influence

on the Synod that suspended him. When his not making a defence was incidentally referred to, while his case was under consideration, a lay member of the court, who had seen much of legal proceedings, though not a professional lawyer, made some remarks on this topic, which we think it were well if every ecclesiastical court in our land had heard, and which we do hope will suggest themselves to the minds of the members of the next General Assembly. They were to this effect. I consider, said he, that the book before us ought to be treated, just as a publication which is affirmed to be libellous is treated, in a civil court. What is the question there? Is it, that the defendant's counsel has said much to show that the language of the publication can bear such a construction as to free it from the charge of being a libel? No such thing. The question is, Has not the publication been viewed and understood as libellous, by those who have read it? Is not the natural and proper import of the language libellous? Yes, and an honest and enlightened jury will give their verdict on these inquiries, let the lawyers give as many *explanations* as they please. And so we must give our verdict on this book in the very same manner, although Mr. Barnes had explained ever so much. No matter if he says that he meant this thing, that, or the other. The question is, what meaning does the world take up, in reading his book? What impression does the book make, and naturally make, on the popular mind? This is to be our guide; and not his explanations, which cannot travel with his book wherever it goes; and if they could, would not make it other than a bad book, after all. It was in accordance with such an estimation as this of the publication of Mr. Barnes, that the Synod pronounced their sentence. The members were fully convinced, that no intelligent and candid reader of that book, could compare it with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of our church, without seeing and saying, that they were in direct opposition to each other. And this we do conscientiously believe, was a just estimate. We do think, that whoever intelligently and attentively examines the commentary of Mr. Barnes on the Epistle to the Romans, must see that it differs from, and opposes our doctrinal standards in essential points. That it denies our covenant relation to Adam, and the *inborn* moral corruption of all his posterity, as the consequence of his fall; denies the utter inability of an unregenerate man to love God and keep his commandments; denies that the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly obeyed the law of God, and endured all its penalty, *in the room and stead of his redeemed people*; and denies, of course, that his finished righteousness is imputed to them, and being received by faith, constitutes this title to eternal life. And we do solemnly ask, whether any one who denies these things, and publishes and propagates his denial in the

Presbyterian church, can be safely continued in the communion of that church?

We cannot but call to mind the inveteracy of error, in the case of Mr. Barnes. His theological training was in the Seminary at Princeton, to which we have understood that he went, at an early period after he became a professing Christian. And he must there have read the authors, and heard the theological lectures, which, if any human means could do it, seemed most likely to have preserved him from the dangerous mistakes into which he has fallen. But his *confidence in himself*, appears to have been such, that he not only retained his errors, but soon after he commenced his ministry, published them to the world, in the sermon which has caused so much trouble to himself and to the whole church to which he belongs: And notwithstanding the warnings he received, in consequence of that first publication, from the presbytery and synod of which he was then a member, and also, as has been shown, from the General Assembly, to which his case was carried up, he has since published his Commentary, expressly for the use of Sabbath-schools,—thus seeking to embue the youth of our church, with sentiments palpably hostile to the creed of their fathers, and calculated eventually to change the character of the church, and ultimately destroy it, and destroy the church itself. He stated, explicitly, at the synod held at York, that although, in a new edition of his commentary, he had modified some expressions, and changed some of the language which he understood had given offence, he had not altered his sentiments. In view of all this, what prospect, we ask, is there, that Mr. Barnes will ever, either change his opinions, or cease to propagate them as extensively as he can? Rarely, indeed, does it happen, that a man so self-confident, abandons sentiments which he has long cherished, and which have become very deeply seated in his mind; or that he ceases to inculcate them on others, as often as an opportunity to do it is afforded.

The charges alleged against Mr. Barnes before the Synod were the following:—

“The Rev. Albert Barnes (said the prosecutor) is hereby charged with maintaining the following doctrines, contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church, viz:

1. That *all sin consists in voluntary action*. Witness his notes on the Epistle to the Romans, pp. 249, 123, 192, 124, 116.

2. That Adam (before and after his fall) was ignorant of his moral relations to such a degree, that he did not know the consequences of his sin would, or should, reach any farther than to natural death. *Idem*. p. 115.

3. That unregenerate men are able to keep the commandments, and convert themselves to God. pp. 164, 165, 103.

4. That Faith is an act of the mind, and not a principle; and is itself imputed for righteousness. pp. 94, 95.

Mr. Barnes is also charged with denying the following doctrines, which are taught in the Standards of the Church: viz.

5. That God entered into covenant with Adam, constituting him a federal or covenant head, and representative to all his natural descendants. pp. 114, 123, 111, 115, 120, 121, 128.

6. That the first sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity. pp. 10, 117, 117, 119, 121, 127, 128.

7. That mankind are guilty, i. e. liable to punishment, on account of the sin of Adam. pp. 123, 128.

8. That Christ suffered the proper penalty of the law, as the vicarious substitute of his people, and thus took away legally their sins, and purchased pardon. Same as on the 6th and 7th charges, also pp. 89, 90.

9. That the righteousness, i. e. the active obedience of Christ to the Law, is imputed to his people for their justification, so that they are righteous in the eye of the law and *therefore* justified, pp. 23, 84, 85, 94, 95, 127, 212.

19. Mr. Barnes also teaches in opposition to the Standards, that justification is simply pardon. pp. 28, 29, 110, 124, 127, 128, 182, 217.

I further charge Mr. Barnes with teaching, as referred to the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 10th of the above doctrines, in *opposition to the Holy Scriptures*; and with denying the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th, of the above specifications, *contrary to the Word of God.*”

After the prosecutor was heard in support of these charges, and Mr. Barnes was found to persist in his determination to make no reply, the roll was called ‘to give each member an opportunity of expressing his opinion in the case.’ After the roll was regularly gone through ‘a motion was made that the appeal be sustained, and the decision of the lower judicatory be reversed.’ On this motion, the ayes and noes were called, and ordered to be recorded.” The vote was declared to stand, ayes 142, noes 16. non liquet 17. excused 1. The majority, it will be perceived, on sustaining the charges and reversing the decision of the presbytery, was uncommonly large—greater than we recollect ever to have known on so important and interesting a question, in any judicature of our church; and on examining the list of those who voted in the negative on this question, we find that 12 of the 16 noes, belonged to the synod of Delaware; leaving but four disinterested, and absolute negative votes, on the motion to sustain the charges.

A committee of nine members, (consisting of six ministers and three elders) was “appointed, to draft a minute, expressive of the sense of synod in the case of Mr. Barnes.” The report of the committee contains a recital of the constitutional grounds on which the synod had proceeded in the trial of this case, the length of which forbids, we are sorry to say, its insertion at large. The report concluded with recommending for the adoption of synod, the three following resolutions—

"Resolved, 1. That in view of the proof presented to Synod, and of the whole case, the decision of the (Assembly's) 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia, in the case of the charges of the said Geo. Junkin against the said Albert Barnes, be and the same hereby is *reversed*, as contrary to truth and righteousness, and the Appeal declared to be sustained.

"2. That some of the errors alleged in the charges to be held by the said Albert Barnes are fundamental; and all of them contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States; and that they do contravene the system of truth therein taught, and set forth in the word of God.

"3. That the said Albert Barnes be, and he hereby is, suspended from the exercise of all the functions proper to the gospel ministry, until he shall retract the errors hereby condemned, and give satisfactory evidence of repentance."

A motion was made to strike out the last of these resolutions, and to insert in its place one, by which it should be "referred to the next General Assembly to decide what judgment shall be rendered in this case; and respectfully petition them to pass such sentence as they may deem most conducive to the glory of God, and the purity and peace of the church." This motion was negatived by a very large majority, and after adopting the third resolution as it stood in the original draft, the vote was taken on the whole; and the ayes and nays being called, it appeared that 116 voted in the affirmative, and 31 in negative. There were two non-liquets. Eleven members, some of whom had been excused from voting, and others who had voted in the negative on the resolution suspending Mr. Barnes, were permitted to enter an explanation on the synodical records, stating, that it was "to avoid even the appearance of *injustice or rashness*, on the part of the Synod," that they wished to refer it to the Assembly, "to decide what judgment should be rendered in this case." One other member, who voted in the negative, was permitted to enter his explanation, stating that he had doubted the right of the Synod to act as proposed by the resolution; "and that he would have preferred sending down this case to the Presbytery, to which Mr. Barnes might belong, with instructions to suspend him from the functions of the Christian ministry, if he should not renounce his errors." We are thus particular, that all pretence of unfairness, in this important part of our statement, may be prevented. The Presbytery to which Mr. Barnes belongs took an appeal to the General Assembly, against "the resolutions of Synod, inflicting censure on them, for contumacy in refusing to submit their records." And Mr. Barnes himself, has taken an appeal from the decision "suspending him from the exercise of the functions of a gospel minister," and announced the intention also to complain, (in connection with his appeal,) "of the various steps by which the Synod was led to the sentence which they have passed"—

This complaint, and the reasons of it, have since been spread before the public. It is made a question, which the Assembly will decide, whether a party who has not submitted to a trial, has a right to appeal. The constitutional rule on the subject is in these words—"All persons who have submitted to a regular trial in an inferior, may appeal to a higher judiciary."

Since the rising of the Synod, as we intimated in the introduction of this address, every agency and influence, which Mr. Barnes and his friends can command, have been put into vigorous operation, to prejudice the public mind in his favour, and against the synodical decision in his case; in hope that it will have an effect, in giving character to the next General Assembly, and ensure the removal of the suspension to which he has been subjected. But we doubt not, that far more than this is hoped for; even the complete undoing of the whole reform, which was so happily commenced by the last Assembly, and the restoration of the lost predominancy of New School men and measures, in the supreme judicatory of our church. We have no question that it is believed, and we confess we think the belief well founded, that the acquittal of Mr. Barnes, and the reversal of many of the most important acts of the last Assembly, must go together. Indeed the acquittal of Mr. Barnes will in itself be, virtually, a reversal of the strong condemnation of certain specified errors by the Assembly of last May; for some of these errors are too palpably apparent in his Commentary on the epistle to the Romans, to admit of a plausible disguise.

Besides the numerous paragraphs which are incessantly sent abroad in the public papers, lauding Mr. Barnes and condemning the Synod that suspended him, extra Numbers of the Philadelphia are employed to carry far and wide 1. His defence before the Presbytery, with additions suggested by what took place at the Synod. 2. His appeal from the decision of the Synod in the matter of his suspension, with his reasons for that appeal, stated at great length. 3. The proceedings of the Session of the church of which he is the pastor, (the first Presbyterian church, Philadelphia,) containing, after an introduction, seven resolutions, in which, among other things, it is affirmed that Mr. Barnes has "faithfully preached to them the same gospel of Jesus Christ which was proclaimed by his predecessor, the Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson;" that "the late unhappy proceedings of the Synod of Philadelphia, have not, in the least degree, diminished their attachment to, and confidence in their present pastor; and that they concur with the Board of Trustees in their request to call a special meeting of the congregation," for a purpose which the trustees had previously specified; and that the resolutions passed, be read publicly in the church on the next Lord's day. 4. The proceedings of the Congregational Meeting, called by the

concurring voice of the Trustees and Session—containing six resolutions, “adopted unanimously, with the exception of the third and fourth, to which there were four or five dissenting votes.” These resolutions, beside re-echoing those of the Session, went much farther than the Session, in condemning, and protesting against the doings of the Synod in the case of Mr. Barnes—so that it appears, that three or four members could not go the length of the majority. The proceedings of the church in the Northern Liberties, of which Mr. Patterson is pastor, published also in the *Philadelphian*, are too extravagant to claim a serious notice.

Here, surely, is a novelty in the Presbyterian Church. Sessions and Congregations, under the care and supervision of a Synod, arraigning and condemning, in unmeasured terms, proceedings of that Synod, sanctioned by a larger majority than was ever witnessed in that body, on any other litigated subject; and not only so, but addressing the whole church, with a manifest intention, to engage the court of the last resort to favour an appellant, whose cause is yet pending, and the plea of the prosecutor not heard; giving withal an *ex parte* statement of the whole proceedings, and making an array of hostile exhibitions against the Synod, as if intended to intimidate and overawe the judicatory that is to pronounce a final judgment, in confirmation or reversal of one of the most solemn and important decisions that a court of the Lord Jesus Christ can ever make. Are such proceedings as these to avail for the benefit and gratification of those who adopt them? The answer—yea or nay—will be given by the next Assembly. Most sincerely do we regret the necessity to which we have been reduced, of either permitting such unwarrantable measures to produce (in all probability) an effect similar to the one that was witnessed in 1831, or by a counter statement, to endeavour to prevent so disastrous a result.

We shall not attempt to follow Mr. Barnes and his people through their voluminous statements and pleadings. Let them stand for what they are worth, after a few brief remarks. No one can fail to observe the tendency, and no doubt the intention, of what Mr. Barnes says in the introduction of his defence,* to excite prejudice against his prosecutor, for bringing charges against him. But let it be remembered that when he and Dr. Junkin were members of the same Presbytery, he insisted that if he was made responsible for the doctrines of his sermon, it should be done in no other way than by tabling charges against him. He declared his readiness to meet such charges—he even invited them. And the ground he then

took has been that which has always been taken by his party since. It was taken by that party, then dominant, in the General Assembly of 1834. From every quarter of the church, we have heard it asked by New School men, why do you not bring charges against the individuals who, you say, are corrupting the church? Try them before their own Presbyteries; the way is open; we want no new rules; bring your charges before the proper judicatures, and let them take the constitutional course, and all will be right. But now when they are taken at their word, when their oft repeated demand and challenge are met, there is a grievous complaint of unkindness; of not obeying the Gospel injunction of private remonstrance, manifestly intended only for cases of individual offence and injury; and of omitting to mention the equivocal word *heresy*, when the prosecution is commenced.

We feel constrained to say a few words, in reply to the following allegation of the Session and congregation, in the praise they bestow on Mr. Barnes, viz: “Our beloved pastor, the Rev. Albert Barnes, ever since he has performed the duties of a spiritual shepherd among us, has faithfully preached the same gospel of Jesus Christ which was proclaimed to us by his predecessor, the Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson.”—Then follows a specification of the leading doctrines of the gospel, as delivered to the congregation by both pastors. The manifest design of this is, to identify Mr. Barnes with Dr. Wilson, so that if you condemn the former, you must condemn the latter also. It is extremely painful to us to say any thing on this delicate point; but we owe it to the truth and to the church, to meet it fairly. In doing so, we are disposed to believe that the session and congregation who have affirmed as above, must have either forgotten a part of what they heard from Dr. Wilson, or misapprehended much that they have heard from Mr. Barnes. The learned and pious pastor to whom Mr. Barnes has succeeded, was not a man to preach in one way, and to write and publish in another; and it so happens, that we have his printed and published sentiments on most of the points in which we think his successor is erroneous; and therefore have all the advantages possessed by the parties who make the allegation on which we remark, in deciding what were the real opinions of Dr. Wilson, on the points in question. During his life and under his auspices, a new edition of Ridgely’s *Body of Divinity* was published in Philadelphia, on several parts of which he wrote copious notes. Not long before his death, moreover, he preached a sermon, and afterward enlarged it into an essay of considerable length, and published it, with the avowed design of leaving it to his people, as a kind of legacy, containing an exhibition of the leading doctrines of the gospel, as held and taught by him. From these two publications, viz: his notes on Ridgely and his essay, it can be demon-

* The inconsistency between the introduction and the conclusion of Mr. Barnes’ defence is truly surprising. In the conclusion, he bears an explicit testimony, as his Presbytery had previously done, to the Christian spirit with which Dr. Junkin conducted his prosecution.

stratively proved, that he differed from Mr. Barnes on every important point, on which Mr. Barnes is now charged with error; and that he also differed on one important point, on which Dr. Junkin has omitted to charge him with error, namely, † the *eternal sonship* of the Lord Jesus Christ, which Mr. Barnes in his Commentary on the Romans, unequivocally denies, and Dr. Wilson, in accordance with our public Standards, firmly maintained. Nothing but the limits to which we are confined, prevents our proving in detail what we have here asserted, by plain and pointed quotations from the publications of Dr. Wilson, contrasted with similar ones from those of Mr. Barnes—and this, if found necessary, shall be done hereafter. It is due to the memory of Dr. Wilson, that he should not be identified with Mr. Barnes in his errors.

CONCLUSION.

Fathers, brethren, and fellow Christians.—If we know ourselves at all, it is not from any malignant feeling toward Mr. Barnes, nor from any ambitious desire of victory, in a conflict in which we have been engaged, that, at such length, we have addressed you. It is, as we have already intimated, because, in a crisis of our ecclesiastical affairs, which we sincerely and solemnly believe will result either in good or evil, of the most extensive and lasting kind, our religious community is without the knowledge and information necessary to guide it right. Action, fatally erroneous, even when the best dispositions are possessed, may proceed from mere ignorance of important facts—from mistakes, arising from wrong or imperfect views of the subject which calls for action. In the ordering of providence, it has been our lot to be placed in circumstances in which we have been obliged—unwillingly and painfully obliged—to be familiar with the case of Mr. Barnes, from its origin to the present hour; and we have felt ourselves under an obligation from which we could not escape with a clear conscience, to spread what we know before our brethren of the Presbyterian church—that they may not act under the influence

† In pages 15, 16, of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Mr. Barnes thus writes—"It is not affirmed that this title (Son of God) was given to the second person in the Trinity before he became incarnate, or to suggest the idea of any derivation or extraction before he was made flesh. There is no instance in which the appellation is not conferred to express his relation after he assumed human flesh. Of any derivation from God, or emanation from him in eternity, the Scriptures are silent." The words marked as emphatic were so marked by Mr. Barnes himself. Compare the above quotation with the Confession of Faith, Chap. II, Sect. III. "The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." See the same—Larger Catechism, in answer to the 10th question.

of the delusive representations which he and his friends are so industriously sending into every part of our land. We think we have shown—

1. That the *prosecutors* of Mr. Barnes have not been his persecutors; that they have had, and securely could have, no other motive in striving to arrest his devious course, and prevent the prevalence of the unsound doctrine he has taught, than the discharge of a sacred duty, which they owed to God, to his truth, and to his church—duty enforced by the solemn sanction of ordination vows.

2. We have shown that the errors of Mr. Barnes are fundamental errors. That he is chargeable, not as has been pretended, with merely using some new words and phrases, to express the very doctrines of our standards, but with a real and wide departure from, or rather a direct opposition to what is taught in those standards; and this in matters vital to the whole system of evangelical truth, and affecting the weal or woe of immortal souls. Hence,

3. It has been shown that the controversy in regard to Mr. Barnes is not a mere local concern, but one in which the whole Presbyterian church is as really, and deeply, if not so immediately interested, as the Synod of Philadelphia and its subordinate judicatories. It has been shown, that this controversy has been connected with a change of the character of the supreme judicatory of the Presbyterian church; a change, in consequence of which, that judicatory, in place of acting as formerly, as the guardian of the purity and peace of the church, and the palladium of her discipline, has, for years in succession, protected the corruptors of the church—the propagators of false doctrine of the most baneful character; and by creating an elective Presbytery and Synod, as well as by other unconstitutional acts, has prostrated all effective discipline, and really organized bodies in which the disorderly and unsound in doctrine might find a refuge, and by which a systematic warfare has been carried on, against the adherents to the orthodox faith, which has destroyed their peace, and filled the church with confusion and discord.

4. We think it worthy of the most special notice, that it is the manifest aim of Mr. Barnes and his friends, to turn away the attention of the public mind, from the nature and merits of the cause at issue, and fix it on the personal character of the man, and the unpleasant circumstances in which he has unhappily involved himself. With this view, his amiable private deportment, and his religious zeal are proclaimed and eulogized. But we do entreat our brethren—we do not now say to do us the justice, but to do themselves and the church of God the justice, to separate this cause altogether from the individual whom it more immediately affects. We admit, without the least reluctance, that Mr. Barnes is amiable in his private character, and that he is

apparently zealous in religion. But he is in no respect more so, than was PELAGIUS, some of whose most objectionable sentiments he unquestionably holds, and endeavours to propagate. The unimpeachable character, and apparent zealous piety of Pelagius, secured him for a time, even from the penetrating scrutiny of Augustine—from the very man who afterwards so nobly and successfully exposed and confuted his pernicious errors—errors which Augustine has most conclusively shown, sap the foundations of evangelical truth and vital godliness. ARMINIUS, too, was an amiable and zealous, as well as a very learned man. Yet he gave rise to a system of wide spread error, which remains to the present day; and by endeavouring to propagate it, while he lived, he introduced contention, confusion, and disorder into the whole Calvinistic church of the United Netherlands, till it was condemned and its influence arrested, by the Synod of Dort. If we act as faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion, we must *distinguish between men and a cause*. Again, therefore, we entreat our brethren, to look away from the individuals who will be immediately concerned in the cause which will go up to the next General Assembly. Look away from us, as well as from Mr. Barnes and his coadjutors; and examine carefully and conscientiously for yourselves, brethren, whether there is not a system concerned in this controversy, which, if it prevail, will change the whole character of our church; a system which, while it is bad in itself, all experience shows, has a strong tendency to something worse than itself—to avowed Unitarianism, with all its soul ruining delusions.

5. The statement we have made shows, we think undeniably, who have been the *culpable disturbers of the peace of our church*. For twenty years after the formation of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian church enjoyed a state of the most enviable unity and harmony. The meetings of her judicatories, from the lowest to the highest, were seasons for the most delightful fraternal intercourse; they were looked forward to with joyful anticipation, and were productive of high pleasure and much edification. What has changed this happy state? What, in place of peace and concord, has filled our church with jars, alienation, reviling, and contention. Can any other cause be justly assigned, than the coming in among us of men and principles, not friendly to the genius of our ecclesiastical system; men and principles really opposed to the doctrines of our Confession of Faith and form of church government? Here, unquestionably, is the true source of the grievous evils that afflict us. No other cause can be pointed out, which can, even plausibly, account for the existing facts. Who then has destroyed the peace of the church? Have not they done it, who, after having been (more kindly than discreetly) admitted into the bosom of our once united and happy family,

have insisted on acting in it just as they pleased, without regard to its established principles and order; nay, who have sought to take the whole management of the household into their own hands, and even to turn the original occupants out of their own house, unless they would quietly submit to the innovations of their guests. Are not the innovators, we ask, the destroyers of the peace of the family, and not they who resist them? The resistance may be the *occasion*, but the innovators are the *criminal cause* of all the confusion, noise, and contention which has been produced.

6. The statement we have made shows how unspeakably important will be the measures adopted by the next General Assembly. Those measures will unavoidably give predominance to the one or the other of the parties which now divide the Church: and if the New School party shall dictate these measures—if that party shall annul the decision of the Synod in the case of Mr. Barnes, (which they certainly will do, if they can;) if they shall turn back the reform which was commenced by the last Assembly, and reverse the decisions made by that body on several important points of constitutional law and order; and if, as heretofore, they shall refuse to sustain discipline, and shall provide for the protection of errorists of almost every name, short of Unitarianism,—then will all the distractions which our Church has experienced from 1830 to 1835, return, with augmented force and acrimony. On the other hand—if orthodoxy shall sway the next Assembly, as it did the last,—if discipline for errors then condemned, shall be sustained, by confirming what the Synod of Philadelphia have done in the case of Mr. Barnes; if other cases of just discipline that may come before our highest ecclesiastical court, shall be faithfully and discreetly borne out; and a well tempered firmness be manifested to maintain our Standards of doctrine and church order, in their integrity, purity, and genuine spirit,—then will contention in our Church, we verily believe, be nearly at an end, and our peace will begin to “flow as a river.” Some, it may be, will withdraw from our connection; but it will be of individuals or judicatories that will promote both our comfort and their own, by leaving us. It should, therefore, be kept in mind, that every vote, given for a commissioner to the next Assembly, should be cast, under a weighty sense of responsibility for its going to the election of the best and wisest eligible man that the voter can select; and every commissioner appointed, should feel an equal responsibility, to overcome every hinderance, not insurmountable, which might prevent his attendance at the opening of the Session, and his continuance through the whole.

7. Finally. Our hope is in God. We desire that our own minds and the mind of every reader of this address, may be deeply and solemnly im-

pressed, with a sense of our entire dependence on the divine interposition, to restore purity and peace to our beloved, back-slidden and bleeding church. For ourselves, we have formed an association for a concert of prayer; each individual agreeing that, at an appointed hour on Saturday evening, he will, in his private retirement, go to the throne of grace, especially to supplicate, in the name of the Great Intercessor, that a heavenly influence may descend and rest on the next General Assembly—to enlighten all its counsels, and to bring every discussion to that result which shall be most pleasing to God, and most conducive to the welfare of our church: and also, for a copious effusion, on all our churches and congregations, of the Spirit of all grace, that pure and undefiled religion may be revived, the children of God be quickened, and genu-

ine converts be multiplied “like drops of morning dew.” May we be permitted, respectfully to recommend something of this kind, to all our brethren. We verily believe, that it was in answer to much fervent prayer, that the last General Assembly were led to the salutary measures they adopted; and it is more, far more, on a similar answer to prayer, than on any thing and every thing beside, that we look for a happy result of the deliberations of that judicatory, at their next meeting—Brethren, farewell. Receive our address kindly, and examine it candidly; and may He who has the hearts of all men in his hand, give it that impression on your minds, which he shall see to be most for his glory, and for the establishment and triumph of the truth as it is in Jesus.





DATE DUE



